

Agricultural Marketing Service
Cotton Division
Grading Branch
Classing Office
Agricultural Commodity Grader (Cotton)
GS-1980-9
Seasonal

SJ 365

INTRODUCTION

This position is located in a local classing office of the Cotton Division. This office is one of several classing offices located in a major cotton producing area through which are administered programs on cotton, cottonseed, cotton linters, and related commodities provided for in legislative and administrative requirements in connection with standards, marketing services, and allied regulatory responsibilities.

MAJOR DUTIES

The work involves examination and evaluation of cotton to determine its official U.S. class and acceptability in terms of quality and condition in accordance with official standards and related regulations.

Examines and evaluates cotton samples to determine appropriate classification. This includes both visual and tactile methods of inspection.

Provides certified assurance of the quality of cotton. Checks to see that assigned classifications have been recorded; may process cotton classification appeals; and assists with preparation of reports.

Collects cotton samples for use in surveys, studies, demonstrations, standards, and training programs.

Factor 1 - Knowledge Required by the Position Level 1-6, 950 pts.

Thorough and detailed knowledge of cotton classification principles, methods, and standards, and skill in interpreting and applying cotton standards to class the full range of cotton samples handled by a classing office.

Knowledge of cotton harvesting and processing techniques to identify their effect on quality factors of cotton.

Skill in detecting and identifying defects in cotton samples and the causes of defects.

Factor 2 - Supervisory Controls Level 2-3, 275 pts.

The office supervisor makes classing assignments and provides general coordination of the work.

The grader independently determines the classification of assigned cotton samples.

A higher graded supervisor spot checks the classification of a random sample (5-10 percent) of assigned cotton samples.

Factor 3 - Guidelines Level 3-3, 275 pts.

The primary guidelines consist of official cotton standards (physical and descriptive). Written and oral instructions and definitions as well as interpretation of official grade are also used.

The employee uses extensive judgment, particularly in making borderline grade determinations. These judgments must be made rapidly (2 per minute) and generally without referring to either the physical or written descriptive standards for specific guidance.

Factor 4 - Complexity Level 4-3, 150 pts.

The work consists of determining the classification of each sample of cotton. Grades are based on factors of color, leaf, and ginning preparation. There are 39 possible grades as well as several recognized reduction factors applicable to any of these grades.

These reduction factors vary from one location to another with harvesting practices and weather conditions. The classer must independently describe quality of every sample in all factors. The employee must look at both sides of each sample and make a final determination in accordance with regulations and instructions. All of this must be done rapidly and with a very high degree of accuracy.

Classification requires two of the five human senses: sight and touch. Memory, reasoning, and close concentration are required to a high degree. The classer sees the color, preparation, and foreign matter and also feels the foreign matter in samples. Appearance of cotton standards must be remembered and the proper classification must be assigned to each sample.

Factor 5 - Scope and Effect Level 5-3, 150 pts.

The work involves making final classification determinations on individual samples of lint cotton.

The classification directly affects the price or value of the 480-pound bale represented by the sample. The monetary valuation of the commodity for which the certification memorandum is issued affects the financial interests of producers, handlers, and buyers.

Factor 6 - Personal Contacts Level 6-1, 10 pts.

Contacts include other employees in the laboratory.

Factor 7 - Purpose of Contacts Level 7-1, 10 pts.

The purpose is limited to the exchange of technical and administrative information related to the work. Coworkers are working toward a common objective: accurate cotton classification and instrument readings.

Factor 8 - Physical Demands Level 8-2, 20 pts.

Classification of cotton is performed from a standing position. Classification of cotton is extremely demanding on the hands, arms, and shoulders since it involves the handling of about 1,600 portions of samples per day. Sample containers weighing 20 to 25 pounds are constantly moved by the employee. The classification process requires physical dexterity and mental alertness and is extremely tiring, both mentally and physically.

Factor 9 - Work Environment Level 9-2, 20 pts.

The work environment exposes employee to crowded conditions. Moderate discomfort may be experienced due to the presence of cotton dust.

TOTAL POINTS - 1860